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The Four (4) Cardinal Virtues of the Lakota Warrior

- 1) Bravery
- 2) Generosity
- 3) Fortitude
- 4) Wisdom

The Definitions for the 4 Virtues are on the two attached pages.

Twenty (20) additional Virtues of the Lakota People

- 1) Compassion
- 2) Listen carefully
- 3) Respect
- 4) Patience
- 5) Be Humble
- 6) Be Guided by Positive Principles
- 7) Understanding
- 8) Walk Quietly and Slowly
- 9) Be Helpful without waiting to be asked
- 10) Positive Attitude
- 11) Practice Forgiveness
- 12) Be Thankful
- 13) Perseverance
- 14) Be Honorable
- 15) Have a loving Heart
- 16) Sacrifice- give of one's self
- 17) Be Truthful
- 18) Be Compassionate
- 19) Pray to the Great Spirit
- 20) When needed ask for Guidance

The following Four (4) Cardinal Virtues were taught to all future Lakota Warriors.

I was taught these Cardinal Virtues over a six (6) year period during the 1980's from the following six (6) Elders of the Hunkpapa, Oglala, and Rosebud Lakota Nation:

- 1) Oliver Red Cloud – Eldest Grandson of the Great Lakota Headsman Red Cloud of the Oglala Lakota from Pine Ridge, SD
- 2) Isaac Dog Eagle – Eldest Great Grandson of Sitting Bull, Hunkpapa Lakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation
- 3) Joe Walker – Eldest Great Grandson of Rain in the Face, Hunkpapa Lakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation
- 4) Felix Kidder – Eldest Great Grandson of Little Soldier, youngest Warrior at the battle of the Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. Felix is from the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation
- 5) Baxter Wolf Guts – Great Grandson of Wolf Guts, saved his village by killing wolves and feeding his the people of his village in one of the worst winters in South Dakota history in the 1870's, Baxter is also a direct descendant of Crazy Horse. Baxter is from the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation
- 6) Willie Burnette – Descendant of Crazy Horse, and a modern Lakota Warrior and a descendant from a long line of Warriors in Rosebud Sioux history

The Four (4) Cardinal Virtues had been taught to all future Lakota Warriors and it is these Warriors who never suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. There are also Twenty (20) additional Virtues of the Lakota that were taught to all Warriors and to all the Lakota People. It is these Twenty Four (24) Virtues that helped all Lakota people to survive amidst the on-slaught of the dominant non-Indian society that wanted our land and all resources.

BRAVERY

Bravery took first rank among the four (4) cardinal virtues. The system of war honors carefully calibrated recognized degrees of bravery. Individual valor meant more than group bravery, and the warrior who most fearlessly risked his life earned the admiration of all the people and received the most cherished honors. First coup - striking an enemy with a coup stick showed more daring than slaying from a distance. A man who had counted first coup second, third, or fourth, boasted of it, had it certified by witnesses, reveled in public acclaim, and wore an eagle feather in his hair as badge of the deed.

GENEROSITY

This virtue reflected the true appreciation of the Tribe's values. People were what counted, not property. Mere possession of property conferred no prestige, indeed it could be viewed as disgraceful. The prestige came from giving away property. An elaborate system of gift-giving, among individuals, families, bands, and even tribes afforded constant opportunity for the practice of this virtue. As one Lakota observed, "A man must take pity on orphans, the crippled and the old. If you have more than one of anything, you should give it away to help those persons." This imperative applied to the prime measure of wealth, the horse, and the prime source of diet, the buffalo, as well as to all other possessions.

FORTITUDE

This virtue assumed two faces, First, was the capacity to endure physical pain and discomfort. The tortures of the Sun Dance, the scalding steam of the Sweat Lodge, the freezing temperatures of a northern plains winter, the wounds of enemy arrows, the bone-shattering injuries of the buffalo chase/hunt---all had to be borne without visible signs of distress.

WISDOM

Bravery ranks first, but, wisdom is the most important among the four Virtues. This Virtue grew out of excellence of the other three, out of experience of age and maturity, out of power and insight gained through an active and fruitful spiritual life. A man who displays wisdom, displays superior judgment in matters of war, the hunt, of human and group relationships, of band and Tribal policy, and of harmonious interaction with the natural and spiritual world. Among the Lakota's, the first three virtues were fairly common, or they could be developed with hard work and long practice. The fourth, however, was rare, and the few so endowed, enjoyed great influence and positions of political and/or spiritual leadership.